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(1718)

PEOPLES TEMPLE - DRAFT CHRONOLOGY

6-13-74: Embassy Georgetown reported on two separate groups of Americans who had established agricultural communities in the vicinity of Matthews Ridge, the Peoples Temple and the Salom Cooperative (the Salom Cooperative later failed). The report describes the Peoples Temple group as "well organized and financed, and with a leasing arrangement with the Government of Guyana (GOG)." (Georgetown 0977 at Tab 1)

7-02-74: Embassy Caracas reported Government of Venezuela (GOV) concern over the presence of American semi-religious communities in Northwest Guyana in an area claimed by Venezuela. (Caracas 6033 at Tab 2).

7-13-74: Two Embassy officers visited the site of the
7-14-74: Peoples Temple Cooperative three miles from Port Kaituma. According to the report there were nine Americans engaged in clearing the site. The total population was expect to grow to fifty by mid-1975. The under was described as well organized, adeq financed, and having the blessing

Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture, Ptolemy Reid. (Georgetown 1236 at Tab 3).

2-02-77: U.S. Customs service launched an investigation into the Reverend Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple in San Francisco and Mendicino county in California. An interim report on this investigation dated August 26, 1977, has been located in the Department's files. It records allegations by former members of the Peoples Temple that Jones had collected as many as 170 unregistered guns and shipped them illegally to Guyana. The report also contains references to the kind of allegations of bizarre beliefs and practices by members of the Peoples Temple which have since become familiar. Apparently this report was not passed on to our Embassy at Georgetown or the GOG. There are no further reports of this investigation, which is described as "open", nor any information indicating that it ever led to charges or indictments being brought. This is the only report of an investigation

of the Peoples Temple by any agency of Federal, State, or Local Governments in the files of the Department. (Customs file SF23PR780024 at Tab 4)

4-11-77: Embassy Georgetown is informed by the GOG that it has learned from the Reverend Jim Jones that 380 members of the Peoples Temple intended to immigrate to the community at Jonestown in the course of the month, raising the total population there to 420. According to the report, Jones indicated the reason for the migration was to escape "repression by the American authorities". (Georgetown 0671 at Tab 5)

8-22-77: Private investigator Joseph Mazor informs Embassy Georgetown by telephone that he has been retained by the parents of seven children brought to Guyana by the Peoples Temple, and asked the Embassy's assistance. (Georgetown 1981 at Tab 6)

8-25-77: Embassy discussed the custody problem with the Attorney General and Chief of Immigration

of the GOG, and was advised that custody claims would have to be pursued in Guyanese courts. (Georgetown 2010 at Tab 7)

8-29-77: Department informed Embassy Georgetown that Attorney J. A. Haas would travel to Guyana August 31 in an attempt to return John Victor Stoen, aged five, to the custody of his mother, Grace Stoen, pursuant to the order of a California court. The Embassy was asked to assist Haas as possible. (State 206679 at Tab 8)

8-30-77: Consul visited Jonestown, toured the site, positively identified the presence of John Victor Stoen, and met with the Reverend Jim Jones who insisted that charges appearing in "New West" magazine and elsewhere that people were being held against their will were deliberate lies. During his trip the Consul encountered Leon Broussard, a Peoples Temple member, at Matthews Ridge. Broussard made no charges against Jones or the Peoples Temple, but simply wished to be

repatriated to the U.S. by the Peoples Temple. The Consul passed the request to Jones, who agreed. The GOG later confirmed Broussard's departure. The Consul also interviewed privately one other Peoples Temple member at the request of relatives. He filed a complete report of his findings and impressions (Georgetown 2087 at Tab 9)

9-06-77: Embassy Georgetown received a welfare and whereabouts inquiry on 12 members of the Peoples Temple from investigator Mazor. Embassy inquired about the legal status of 130 to 150 minors who are residents of Jonestown formerly considered to be wards of the State of California. (Georgetown 2132 at Tab 10)

9-08-77: Embassy Georgetown arranged appointments for Attorney Haas with GOG Foreign Minister and Justice Minister, and also Solicitor General, in connection with the Stoen case. On September 6 Haas accompanied by GOG officials was unsuccessful in serving papers on the Reverend Jones or any other members

of the Peoples Temple at Jonestown.
(Georgetown 2175 at Tab 11)

9-09-77: Department approved Embassy assistance to Haas but warned against sending a Consular Officer to serve papers, citing federal regulations (22 C.F.R. 92-85). Department authorized a request to the appropriate Ministry of the GOG for "maximum effort" in delivering the documents. (Department 216553 at Tab 12)

9-09-77: Embassy Georgetown reported that a further attempt by Haas and GOG officials to serve papers on September 9 also failed, and that they "met with a hostile reception" from the inhabitants of Jonestown.
(Georgetown 2206 at Tab 13)

9-10-77: Consul attended on the Stoen case court hearing at Georgetown, and reported that the Judge was visibly angered by the failure of Marshals to serve papers at Jonestown. The Judge issued an order for the arrest of John Victor Stoen and a summons be issued to the Reverend Jim Jones. (IBID)

9-12-78: Embassy Georgetown reported that the Stoen case had "entered the political arena", and that Haas said the orders issued by the Supreme Court Justice had not been signed by competent authority. (IBID)

9-15/16-78: The U.S. charge took the Stoen case up with both the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister to determine the reason for continued delay, and to protest the apparent denial of due process. (IBID)

9-17-78: The Embassy sent a note to the GOG officially and formally expressing concern over the intervention of the GOG in the impending Stoen case. (IBID)

9-21-78 Embassy Georgetown reported that, in response to the U.S. note cited above, the court orders issued September 10 will be acted upon, and that a hearing has been scheduled for September 23, 1977. (Georgetown 2316 at Tab 13)

9-26-77: Consul met with Attorneys for both the Stoen family and the Peoples Temple, both of whom were of the opinion that the case would not be easily resolved. The Consul was not permitted to attend the hearings, which were held in the Judge's chambers, but he made sure that both parties were well and ably represented, and stationed himself outside the Judges Chambers throughout each hearing. (Georgetown 2363 and 2334 at Tab 14)

1-11-78: Consul visited Jonestown and observed or met individually with approximately 500 to 600 of the 800 persons said to be residents at Jonestown. He reported that, on the basis of his observations and interviews it is unlikely that any are being held against their will, and that he had no sense individuals were fearful, or under duress or pressure. Persons interviewed, some allegedly by relatives, to be held against their will, seemed spontaneous and free in their responses to his questions. He

said some people were engaged in hard physical labor natural on a farm, but all appeared to be well fed and cared for, and expressed satisfaction with their lives. The Consul also queried local GOG police officials who visited the community frequently, often without advance notice, who said they had never received the impression that there was something strange occurring there. Hence, according to the Embassy, there was "no hard evidence to support the numerous allegations which have been made".
(Georgetown 6065 at Tab 14)

1-20-78: Department commended the Embassy for its excellent reporting on Jonestown and the Peoples Temple, approved the Embassy's program of quarterly Consular visits to the community; but cautioned against creating the impression of possible invasions of privacy.
(Department 016766 at Tab 15)

2-01-78: Embassy Georgetown reported the status of the Stoen case; explained legal delays;

noted that denial of due process warranting an official protest does not appear to have occurred; and reported that it is resisting efforts by both sides in this dispute between Americans to draw it into the dispute on their side. (Georgetown 0401 at Tab 16)

2-07-78: Department informed Embassy Georgetown of the intention of Timothy Stoen, father of John Stoen, to visit Guyana, and his request to visit Jonestown in company with Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission. Department recommended that Stoen's request be met, but ultimately he failed to visit Guyana. (Department 032341 at Tab 17)

2-10-78: Department informed the Embassy of widespread Congressional interest in the Stoen case, including that of Congressman Ryan. (Department 03662 at Tab 18)

2-14-78: Department requested the Embassy to approach the GOG and inquire with respect to the

progress of the Stoen case. (Department 039014 at Tab 19)

2-14-78: The Embassy discussed the Stoen case with the local attorney for the Stoen family, who said that delays could not be considered unusual or excessive, and that an official inquiry could be counter-productive. (Georgetown 6231 at Tab 20)

2-24-78: The Consul met with the Minister of Justice to present U.S. Governments concerns with continued delays in the Stoen case. The Minister explained that delays were not unusual in civil cases such as this, and that his reputation as a "legal technician" could be counted upon to assure the independence of the judiciary and prevent undue (read GOG) interference in the case. (Georgetown 0631 at Tab 21)

5-10-78: Consul made his regular quarterly visit to Jonestown, holding private interviews with residents at the request of friends and relatives, and explaining to several Peoples

Temple residents who had applied for Guyanese citizenship the possible consequences of their act. He noted no major changes from his earlier visits in the appearance of the community or the behavior or demeanor of its inhabitants. (Georgetown 1544 at Tab 22)

5-12-78: Timothy Stoen, father of John Victor Stoen, wrote the Secretary forwarding petitions to him and to Prime Minister Burnham to stop violations of human rights at Jonestown. The petition to Prime Minister Burnham included a large number of specific charges and allegations. Further, the letter asked the Secretary to transmit the petition to the Prime Minister, and to order Ambassador Burke to station U.S. Embassy personnel at Jonestown around the clock. Mr. Stoen also asked that he be informed when the petition had been transmitted to the Prime Minister, and for the Secretary's response to his request for an investigation. There is nothing in the files

to indicate that the petition was formally transmitted to the GOG, but the Embassy did discuss it informally with the Commissioner of police. The Department lacked both legal authority and personnel which would have permitted it to meet Mr. Stoen's request for stationing officers at Jonestown or carrying out an investigation. Unfortunately, however, it apparently did not reply to Mr. Stoen explaining these limitations. (Letter at Tab 23)

5-12-78: Mrs. Deborah Blakey, a representative of the Peoples Temple at Georgetown, came to the Embassy saying she wished to sever her connection with the organization and return to the U.S. She had a pre-paid ticket from a relative in the U.S., but said her passport was in Jonestown. She was apprehensive that if she asked for the passport the Peoples Temple would some how prevent her departure. Embassy issued her an emergency passport and a Consular Officer,

who happened to be travelling on the same flight, personally escorted her out of the country. (Georgetown 1545 at Tab 24)

6-06-78: Embassy Georgetown summarized its knowledge of the Peoples Temple; emphasized that there was no effective GOG presence or control at Jonestown; asked that the Department review the situation to determine the legal authority and responsibility of the U.S. Government for a community of Americans living voluntarily abroad; and, if appropriate, requested that it be instructed that it press the GOG to assume effective jurisdiction at Jonestown. (Georgetown 6946 at Tab 25)

6-15-78: Mrs. Blakey executed an eleven page affidavit in California describing life in Jonestown and making a number of serious charges and allegations against Reverend Jones, including reported rehearsals for a mass suicide by Jonestown residents. The Department received a copy of this affidavit,

and believes a number of other departments and agencies of Federal and Local Governments did as well. There is no evidence that it was sent to the Embassy or the GOG. (Affidavit at Tab 26)

6-26-78: Department responded to the Embassy's earlier request (Tab 25) confirming GOG jurisdiction over Jonestown and its residents, but suggesting that an approach to the GOG urging it to exercise its jurisdiction could be construed by some as U.S. Government interference unless an American citizen or family member requested assistance or there was evidence of lawlessness. (Department 161993 at Tab 27)

8-01-78: Embassy reported that the quarterly trip to Jonestown had to be aborted because heavy rains had rendered the airstrip at Port Kaituma unusable. (Georgetown 2570 at Tab 28)

8-16-78: Embassy reported that the Justice hearing the Stoen custody case had declined to render judgement and returned the case to the Chief Justice for re-assignment. The Judge charged outside influence and harrassment designed to influence the outcome of the case. (Georgetown 2629 at Tab 28)

9-10-78: Investigator Mazor visited Jonestown, apparently with the concurrence of the Peoples Temple and accompanied by Charles Garry, Attorney for the Temple. He later reported to a Consular Officer that he had travelled all over Jonestown, unescorted most of the time; had spoken to whomever he wished; and had offered to 35-40 specific persons the opportunity to leave with him with none accepting. He described Jonestown as "a marvel of significant scope". The Embassy comments that Mazor's change of attitude was surprising in view of his earlier dedicated efforts on behalf

of his clients to extract members of the Peoples Temple from Jonestown. (Georgetown 3925 at Tab 29)

9-15-78: Assistant Secretary Vaky and other Department officers met with Congressman Ryan and members of his staff. The Congressman explained that he had conducted a four year investigation of the Peoples Temple, and that he intended to travel to Guyana to visit Jonestown. He requested the assistance of the Department and the Embassy. Vaky promised all possible assistance, but cautioned that his intention of taking newsmen and friends and relatives of Jonestown members might result in his being refused entry to the community. He explained that there was no way the Peoples Temple could be forced to receive him. The subject of possible brainwashing came up, and another Department Officer noted that Consular Officers lacked the training or experience to make judgements

in cases of alleged brainwashing. He recommended that the Congressman take with him a clinical Psychiatrist capable of making such judgements and evaluating the situation as it developed. Department officers shared whatever knowledge and information they had regarding the Peoples Temple with Congressman Ryan and his staff. Generally it proved less complete than the Congressmans own information. The Department informed Embassy Georgetown of Congressman Ryan's intentions and asked for its assessment of possible problems. (Department _____ at Tab 30)

9-19-78: Mr. Mark Lane, Author and Attorney for the Peoples Temple, alleged during a press conference at Georgetown that the U.S. Government was conspiring to destroy the Reverend Jones, the Peoples Temple, and Jonestown. He said that none of the charges which had been made against Jones and the Temple were accurate or true. He threatened million dollar suits against

the FBI, the CIA, and other agencies of the U.S. Government. (Georgetown 3098/3174 at Tab 31)

9-25-78: Ambassador Burke responded to the Department's request for his views on the visit of Congressman Ryan noting the physical difficulties of a large party making such a visit. He also emphasized the importance of obtaining prior agreement for the visit from the Peoples Temple, and repeated the legal position of the Embassy vis-a-vis the Peoples Temple under Foreign Service Regulations. (Georgetown 3125 at Tab 32)

10-3-78: Two Department officers met with members of Congressmen Ryan's staff, passed on Ambassador Burke's views on the proposed visit, and reported attorney Mark Lane's press conference. Other aspects of the visit were discussed. (Department _____ at Tab 33)

10-25-78: Department officers again met with Congressman Ryan's staff, who reported that the visit was scheduled for November 14-18 and would include Congressman Derwinski and at least six staff members. Various aspects of the visit were discussed including the importance of prior notice to the Peoples Temple. (Department at Tab 34)

11-01-78 Department informed Embassy Georgetown that Congressman Derwinski would not be with the party, and transmitted the text of a telegram to the Peoples Temple informing them of Congressman Ryan's intention to visit Jonestown. (Department 278140 at Tab 35)

11-02-78 Embassy Georgetown requested that a lawyer from the Department familiar with both the Privacy and Freedom of Information Acts accompany Congressman Ryan's party to Guyana. (Georgetown 3597 at Tab 36)

11-14-78: Department informed Embassy Georgetown of Congressman Ryan's itinerary, and noted that Department officers had been in virtual daily contact with the Congressman's staff. (Department _____ at Tab 37)

11-04-78: Embassy Georgetown reported a controversy over whether Congressman Ryan's party would be able to visit Jonestown or not. The Peoples Temple was apparently put off by Ryans intention to bring a TV camera crew. The Temple initially refused to receive the party, but reversed itself, subject to certain conditions after the personal intervention of GOG Ambassador to the U.S. Lawrence Mann. GOG Foreign Minister reportedly pleased to receive Congressman Ryan. (Georgetown 3619 at Tab 38)

11-09-78: Department political and legal officers once again briefed Congressman Ryan's

staff on logistical and legal aspects of the trip. (Memo at Tab 40)

11-13-78: Department political, legal, and consular officers met with Congressman Ryan, members of his staff, concerned relatives and former members of Peoples Temple. Ryan explained his initial interest in the case was caused by a long time friend who had grand children at Jonestown. Debbie Blakey, former members of Peoples Temple briefed group on accounts of beatings of members and other disciplinary measures of organization. She indicated that all consular visits were stage managed by Temple. She described help given to her by Embassy to depart Guyana. Ryan thanked Department for attention and interest. Deputy Assistant Secretary Gise invited Congressman and party to return to discuss results of trip.

11-14-78: Embassy Georgetown requested clearance (Georgetown 3714) for statement to Press

advising them; Peoples Temple community is group of private Americans residing in Guyana, that Embassy cannot force group to receive official and non-official visitors, and that members of the Temple are protected by the Privacy Act of 1974. Department (Reftel 289798) authorized Embassy to issue statement if asked.

11-15-78: Embassy reported difficulties encountered by journalists arriving in Guyana with Codel (Georgetown 3734). Embassy was able to arrange for visas for journalists for five (5) day visit of Codel. One journalist was detained by the police at Timehri airport for possession of Guyanese currency. (Georgetown 3729) reported on Embassy efforts to have him admitted.

11-16-78: Ambassador, Codel, Deputy Chief of Mission and Consul met with group of concerned relatives (Georgetown 3761). Ambassador listened to description of several former members of Temple of alleged conditions

in Jonestown and concern expressed by group of their inability to contact their relatives. Ambassador related Embassy obligations and responsibilities. He described Consular visits and promised to have Consul check on relatives during his next visit to Jonestown. Ambassador telephoned Peoples Temple to urge them to let group visit relatives while they are in Guyana. Temple representatives complained of harrassment by Codel Press, and "concerned relatives since groups arrival on November 15. Report concludes with statement by some members of concerned relatives that they were prepared to force entry into Jonestown if necessary.

11-18-78: Ambassador informed Department (Georgetown 3774) that he has just been informed by the Prime Minister that the Codel was attacked at Port Kaituma by a group of "white civilians" and nine or ten people including the Congressman may be dead.

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